

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HAVANA 01276 170105Z
ACTION SS-25

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-----120313 170107Z /62
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INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 1276

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, PORG, CU
SUBJECT: CUBAN VICE-PRESIDENT TO ATTEND SSOD

1. USINT HAS RECEIVED VISA APPLICATION ON BEHALF OF DR. CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCILS OF STATE AND OF MINISTERS AND CHIEF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISER TO PRESIDENT CASTRO, WHO WILL HEAD CUBAN DELEGATION TO THE SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT (SSOD).

2. IT OCCURS TO ME THAT RODRIGUEZ' VISIT MAY AFFORD AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR A SENIOR U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL TO HAVE A FRANK EXCHANGE WITH HIM ON THE TROUBLED STATE OF U.S.-CUBAN RELATIONS AND IN PARTICULAR WITH RESPECT TO CUBAN INTENTIONS IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST. AS THE DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL, I HAVE HAD OCCASIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS POLICY MATTERS WITH RODRIGUEZ AND HAVE FOUND HIM, AS HAVE MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES HERE, EXTREMELY WELL-INFORMED AND SENSIBLE. AS AN OLD-LINE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER, RODRIGUEZ IS WIDELY VIEWED HERE AS A RELATIVE "MODERATE" WHO IS ACUTELY AWARE OF DESIRABILITY OF CUBAN IMPROVING ITS ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE WEST, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES--AS HAS BEEN DONE BY THE OTHER COMMUNIST STATES. WHILE THERE SHOULD NEVER BE ANY DOUBT THAT IT IS FIDEL
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CASTRO WHO DECIDES CUBAN FOREIGN AS WELL AS DOMESTIC POLICY, RODRIGUEZ IS AN INFLUENTIAL ADVISER THROUGH WHOM U.S.G. VIEWS CAN RELIABLY AND PERHAPS PERSUASIVELY BE PASSED.

3. THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR DIRECT DIALOGUE AT A HIGH LEVEL STRIKES ME AS PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE BECAUSE WE HAVE SEEN A NUMBER OF SIGNES RECENTLY THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING

RODRIGUEZ, HAVE RELIED UPON VARIOUS UNOFFICIAL AMERICANS VISITING HAVANA AS VEHICLES FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF WHAT THE CUBANS CONSIDERED AUTHORITATIVE VIEWS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. I BELIEVE THAT THIS RELIANCE ON OUTSIDERS IS MISPLACED AND DANGEROUS, AND THAT THE MEETING I AM SUGGESTING COULD BE INVALUABLE IN SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT AND, HOPEFULLY, STRESSING TO THE GOC THAT STRICTLY OFFICIAL CHANNELS--INCLUDING THE TWO INTERESTS SECTIONS--SHOULD BE USED IN FUTURE.

4. DEPARTMENT WILL, OF COURSE, WISH TO TAKE APPROPRIATE SECURITY AND CUSTOMS/IMMIGRATION COURTESY MEASURES IN ANTICIPATION OF HIS ARRIVAL WHICH IS PROGRAMMED FOR MAY 23 ON CHARTER AIRCRAFT. (OVERFLIGHT AND LANDING REQUEST HAS NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED.)
LANE

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Message Attributes

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